

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MEXICO 07733 300108Z

11

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /057 W

----- 023246

R 300010Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9704

INFO ALL CONSULATES IN MEXICO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 7733

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MX

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION

REF: A) A-533 OF DECEMBER 14, 1974, D) MEXICO 7594 (PARA 9

B) A-170 OF MAY 8, 1975

C) MEXICO 7593 (PARA 7)

1. SUMMARY: MEXICANS ARE SUDDENLY ANXIOUS AND JITTERY OVER THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION AS GENUINE DOUBT HAS CREPT INTO MINDS OF MANY WHO HAVE LONG THOUGHT GOVERNMENT SECRETARY MOYA PALENCIA WAS SHOO-IN. PRIMARY REASON FOR THIS CHANGE HAS BEEN PUBLIC VISIBILITY OF PRESIDENCY SECRETARY, CERVANTES DEL RIO, CONTRASTING WITH MOYA'S LOW PROFILE. WHETHER CERVANTES' RISE IS A TRUE INDICATION OF HIS PROSPECTS OR EVIDENCE THAT SUCCESSION IS BEING CAREFULLY STAGE-MANAGED TO KEEP EVERYONE GUESSING (WE FAVOR THE LATTER) THE RESULT IS MALAISE AND ANXIETY. ECHEVERRIA, IN THE MEANTIME, IS AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS POLITICAL POWER. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PRI'S (RULING PARTY'S) PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IS NOW ONLY SIX TO SEVEN WEEKS AWAY (IN 1969 IT OCCURRED OCT 21). ECHEVERRIA HIMSELF HAS SAID IT WILL BE AFTER OCTOBER 12. ECHEVERRIA'S RETURN AUGUST 22 FROM A 45 DAY TRIP ABROAD HAS INAUGURATED THE HOMESTRETCH PHASE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION RACE AND A RISE IN THE PUBLIC PULSE WAS TO BE EXPECTED. HOWEVER, IN THE LAST TWO

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 07733 300108Z

TO THREE WEEKS WE HAVE NOTED GENUINE DOUBT AND WONDER AMONG

CONTACTS OVER THE CANDIDATE'S IDENTITY. SOME MOYA (SECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT) SUPPORTERS ARE CONCERNED THAT HE HAS SLIPPED. NEARLY EVERYONE AGREES THAT PRESIDENCY SECRETARY CERVANTES DEL RIO HAS STAYED IN THE RUNNING AND THAT HIS CHANCES HAVE SLOWLY BUT DRAMATICALLY PROSPERED OVER THE COURSE OF THE SUMMER MONTHS TO THE POINT WHERE SOME EVEN PUT THEM AHEAD OF MOYA'S.

3. THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THIS CHANGE HAS BEEN CERVANTES' PUBLIC VISIBILITY, CONTRASTING WITH MOYA'S VIRTUAL DISAPPEARANCE. (MOYA HAS MADE ONLY ONE SPEECH DURING THIS PERIOD.) SINCE APRIL, WHEN MOYA'S FORTUNES REACHED THEIR PEAK, CERVANTES:

- A) HEADED THE GOM DELEGATION TO THE APRIL MEETING ON SELA;
- B) TRAVELED TO WASHINGTON TO SIGN AN IMPORTANT WORLD BANK LOAN;
- C) HAS TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY THROUGHOUT MEXICO INAUGURATING "REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES";
- D) INAUGURATED THE CLUB OF ROME MEETING IN GUANAJUATO (REPRESENTING ECHEVERRIA);
- E) APPEARED AS THE SURPRISE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT AT AN ASSEMBLY OF PUBLISHERS WHOSE ORGANIZERS HAD EXPECTED MOYA;
- F) ADDRESSED THE MEETING OF THIRD WORLD EDUCATORS HELD IN ACAPULCO; AND
- G) ON AUGUST 28 SPOKE AT THE PRESIDENT'S BEHEST AT A POLITICAL RALLY ATTENDED BY ALL THE CANDIDATES.

NO OTHER PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRANT HAS EVEN APPROACHED THIS PUBLIC PERFORMANCE. THE MOST COMMON INTERPRETATION IS THAT CERVANTES' VISIBILITY IS A SIGN OF PRESIDENTIAL FAVOR OR EVEN AN EFFORT BY ECHEVERRIA TO CREATE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR HIS CANDIDACY.

4. IN OUR LAST MAJOR ANALYSIS (A-170 MAY 8) OF THE SUCCESSION, WE POINTED OUT THAT EVERY OUTGOING PRESIDENT IS AT BEST A LAME DUCK FOR THE FINAL THIRTEEN MONTHS OF HIS PRESIDENCY, SINCE A PSYCHOLOGICAL, IF NOT LEGAL, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MEXICO 07733 300108Z

TRANSFERENCE OF POWER TAKES PLACE WHEN THE CANDIDATE IS ANNOUNCED. WE CONCLUDED:

"SINCE THE PERSONAL INTEREST OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA IS TO KEEP POLITICANS AND INTEREST GROUPS GUESSING UNTIL THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT, WE WILL NOT BE SURPRISED TO SEE DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE NEXT FIVE MONTHS WHICH APPEAR TO FAVOR ONE OR ANOTHER RIVAL OF THE CURRENT FFONTRUNNNER."

5. THE FACTORS IN PARAGRAPH 3 ABOVE CAN EASILY BE INTERPRETED AS JUST SUCH DEVELOPMENTS AND WE ARE INCLINED TO READ THEM AS STAGE MANAGING FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

A) OTHER, MORE SUBSTANTATIVE DEVELOPMENTS, POINT TO A CONSERVATIVE TREND. THESE INCLUDE THE ENTRY OF BUSINESSMEN INTO THE PRI, FIDEL VELASQUEZ'S CRITICISM OF ECONOMIC POLICY AND HIAS ASSUMING THE PRESIDENCY OF THE CONGRESS OF LABOR FOR THE PERIOD ENDING DECEMBER 31, GOM HARASSMENT OF THE MEXICAN COMMUNIST PARTY, THE FAILURE OF NEW LEFTIST POLITICAL PARTIES TO REGISTER, AND A TEND TOWARD CONSERVATISM IN ECONOMIC POLICY. ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE MORE CONSONANT WITH A MOYA CANDIDACY THAN WITH CERVANTES;

B) A PRESIDENTIAL TIPPING OF THE HAND (AT LEAST TO THE POINT WHERE THE PUBLIC IS CONVINCED OF THE CANDIDATE'S IDENTITY) IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE PRESIDENT'S BEST PERSONAL INTEREST; AD

C) THE REASON FOR A SEVEN MONTH PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IS TO BUILD PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE PRI CANDIDATE. NO SUCH EFFORT IS NECESSARY AT THIS TIME.

6. STILL THERE IS REASON FOR CAUTION. IF MEXICAN POLITICANS, WHOSE VIES COUNT, DECIDED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S PREFERENCE IS CERVANTES, THEY MAY HEDGE THEIR BETS OR EVEN SHIFT SUPPORT TO CERVANTES. A SECOND REASON IS THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF, WHOSE DECISIONS IN MAJOR MATTERS ARE OFTEN MOST INFLUENCED BY THOSE WHO HAVE THE LAST WORD  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MEXICO 07733 300108Z

WITH HIM. IN THIS INSTANCE, THE TIMING OF THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP, ACCENTUATING THE THIRD WORLD ELEMENT OF HIS SOMETIMES CONTRADICTORY POLITICAL TENDENCIES, COULD PUT HIM IN A FRAME OF MIND TO FAVOR CERVANTES. THIS IS THE CURRENT VIEW (INDEED FEAR) OF SEVERAL HIGHLY PLACED GOM OFFICIALS WHO WERE WITH THE PRESIDENT DURING MUCH OF THE TRIP (SEE REFS C AND D).  
JOVA

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN



## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL STABILITY, PRESIDENT, POLITICAL SITUATION, ELECTION CANDIDATES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 30 AUG 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975MEXICO07733  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750301-0288  
**From:** MEXICO  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t1975082/aaaaaayp.tel  
**Line Count:** 161  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 74 MEXICO A-533, 75 MEXICO 7594, 75 MEXICO A-170, 75 MEXICO 7593  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 06 JUN 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <06 JUN 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <09 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION  
**TAGS:** PINT, MX  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006